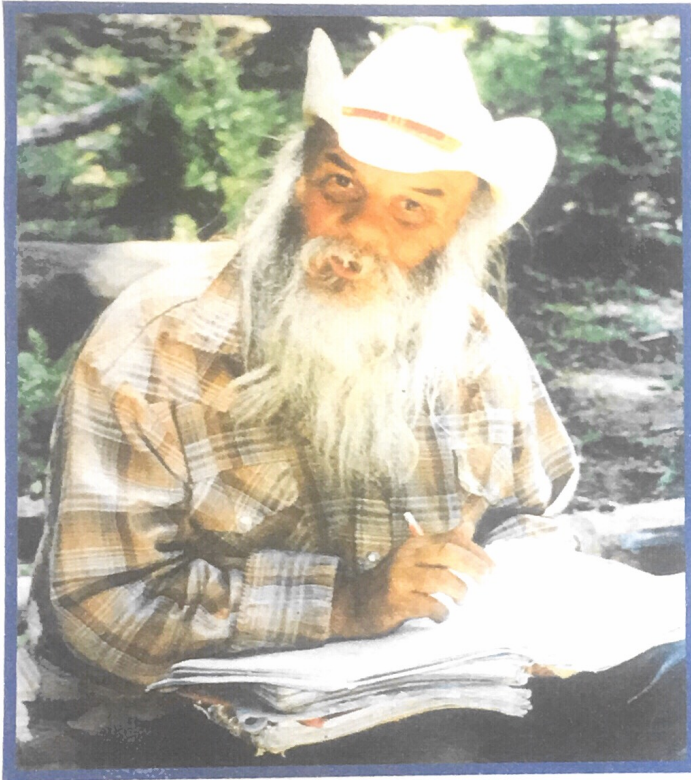




# Rainbow Family

## Life Stories



*by Jodey Bateman.  
Interviews with Rainbow  
Family of Living Light  
folks conducted between  
1977 and 2008.*

*Scanned in 2018.  
Jodey Bateman may be  
contacted on Facebook,  
or [jodey.bateman@yahoo.com](mailto:jodey.bateman@yahoo.com)*

13. THE AUSTIN RAINBOW CO-OP HOUSE  
- Jodey's Introduction

2 pages

[13.]



## The Austin Rainbow Co-op House

In the STP section, Rufus describes the large street people scene in Austin, Texas. He mentions one condition that makes the street scene there so large - it's legal to panhandle in daylight hours. Other factors include a mild climate in winter, closeness to the Mexican border - and for a long time a regular supply of marijuana and peyote from the border area and a large left wing around the University of Texas, which meant for a long time, there would be people sympathetic to strangers, no matter how ragged. Also Austin is near the major hitch-hiking route between Florida and California.

In 1975, there was a Healing Gathering at Round Rock, 15 miles north of Austin to gather energy for the Arkansas Rainbow Gathering. Since then there has been a large community of people attracted to Rainbow in Austin, especially among the street people.

In the late 70's Austin became less receptive to street people for such reasons as fear of stealing, late drunken parties and persistent panhandling. It has become harder for them to find places to stay. They often sleep outdoors in bushy places on winter nights or in deserted houses.

In December, 1977, a group of Rainbow people, financed by Rose, a wealthy Rainbow sister, rented a building for the Rainbow Communications Co-op House to provide free food and shelter. Many of the males who stayed in the house had construction jobs and put money from their wages into the Rainbow House. Others, both male and female, sold flowers on the street and brought that money in. A good deal of food and money was donated by individuals and stores and there were the usual Rainbow dumpster runs.

Red River Women's Press, a left-wing printing co-op, printed leaflets advertising the Rainbow House. The Red River women were members of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW).

The Rainbow House was not far from the Austin State Mental Hospital. Many patients when they were released



from the hospital had no place to go but the Rainbow House. People living in the area complained to the local authorities about bizarre behavior, often by former mental patients, around the Rainbow House. There was always a police car within two blocks of the Rainbow House, although the police never responded to requests for help by people staying in the house.

Finally in March, 1978, a former mental patient called Teddy Bear shot and killed a young man named Larry Smith in the Rainbow House. There was a flood of bad publicity in the local press about the Rainbow House. With the help of a lawyer, the Rainbow House managed to stay open until just before the Oregon Rainbow Gathering in the summer of 1978, when most of the people connected with the house went to the gathering.